

University of Canterbury

Propaganda in Prose

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A Comparative Analysis of Language in British Blue  
Book Reports on Atrocities and Genocide  
in Early Twentieth-Century Britain

This dissertation is submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of B.A. Honours in History at the University of Canterbury. This dissertation is the result of my own work. Material from the published or unpublished work of other historians used in the dissertation is credited to the author in the footnote references. The dissertation is approximately 9964 words in length.

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# Abstract

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This paper examines three British Blue Book reports published in early twentieth-century Britain during the war period. The first report examines the invasion of Belgium by the German army and their maltreatment of Belgian people. The second report discusses the Committee of Union and Progress' acts of cruelty against Armenian Christians. Both of these reports were authored, compiled and then distributed by the British Government in Britain and other Western countries. The third report discusses German colonial rule in South-West Africa and their abuse of 'native' Herero. This report was compiled and authored in South-West Africa, but published for a British audience. This dissertation engages in a comparative analysis of these three Blue Book reports. It examines how they are structurally different, but thematically and qualitatively similar. Investigation begins with discussion of the reports' authors and how they validate claims made in the respective prefaces. Subsequently, there is examination of thematic similarities between each report's historical narratives. Historiography is employed extensively to contextualise these reports and engage in wider debates on their objectives. This dissertation engages with three major strands of historiography: The British Government's employment of propaganda during the First World War British Blue Books reports; and wartime propaganda. The South-West African report has a lack historiography. This paper seeks to fill a gap, while also adding to modern scholarship on British Blue Books. This dissertation demonstrates that wartime British Blue Books were not unique, as they deliberately illustrate similar thematic tropes and rhetorical devices throughout both their prefaces and historical narratives.

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# Introduction

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During the war-period it came to be recognized that the mobilization of men and means was not sufficient; there must be a mobilization of opinion.<sup>1</sup>

Harold Lasswell's statement illustrates a dramatic ideological shift in the perception of warfare during the First World War. During this conflict, the British Government employed a wide array of propaganda mediums to influence popular opinion, including posters, advertisements and newspapers. One medium, which has remained both ethically and academically contentious, is the British Government's publication of official Blue Book reports discussing wartime events. This dissertation comparatively discusses three Blue Book reports that were published during the First World War. Following the Great War, the British Government's employment of propaganda was widely condemned by academics.<sup>2</sup> As an outcome, these Blue Books have also seen a lack in historiographical scholarship until the latter twentieth- and early twenty-first centuries. Modern historiography on British Blue Books has increasingly adhered to a revisionist perspective, examining and extending previous historiography that classified wartime Blue Books as falsified propaganda.<sup>3</sup> By engaging in a comparative approach, this dissertation examines how underlying narratives and tropes of atrocity propaganda are represented in each Blue Book's preface and historical narratives of the different countries. This dissertation will specifically explore how different authors introduce and describe evidence in each Blue Book. This study does not examine the evidence itself, as this would require access to international archives within a larger research time frame. This dissertation is not discussing the merits of the report or otherwise their discussion of events, but simply assessing the explanatory language.

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<sup>1</sup> H. Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War*, London, Keagen Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1927, p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., A. Ponsonby, *Falsehood in Wartime: Containing an Assortment of Lies circulated throughout the nations during the Great War*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1928.

<sup>3</sup> For examples of revisionist approaches to British Blue Books see chapters 5 and 6 of J. Horne and A. Kramer, *German Atrocities 1914: A History of Denial*, New Haven, London, Yale University Press, 2001; A. Sarafian, 'Introduction', in J. Bryce and A. Toynbee, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-196: Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Fallodon by Viscount Bryce: Uncensored Edition*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, ed. and intro. A. Sarafian, Princeton, London, Gomidas Institute, 2005; J. Silvester and J. Gewald, 'Introduction', *Words Cannot Be Found: German Colonial Rule in Namibia: An Annotated Reprint of the 1918 Blue Books*, Leiden, Brill Academic Publishers, 2003.

Comparative studies seek to identify common components in different contexts by comparing and contrasting specific themes or elements, which may be overlooked if examined singularly.<sup>4</sup> This dissertation comparatively examines three British Blue Books: *The Report of the Committee on Alleged German Outrages* (1915), *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire* (1916) and the *Report on the Natives of South-West Africa and Their Treatment by Germany* (1918). These reports will be referred to by the populations they are depicting; that is, the ‘Belgian report’, the ‘Armenian report’ and the ‘Herero report’, in this paper. In Belgium there were massacres and war crimes carried out by the German Army, and in both Armenia and South-West Africa genocides were implemented by the different Governments.<sup>5</sup>

This dissertation engages with authorial intentions and their ‘voices’ in report text, so it is crucial to establish who the authors were and the relevance of this to each report. All reports are associated with prominent public figures, whose status provided authority to these reports that may have influenced the reception of this government propaganda in the British public. The Belgian report was constructed and compiled by a committee of knighted politicians and academics: Sir Frederick Pollock, Alfred Hopkinson, H.A.L. Fisher, Harold Cox, Sir Kenelm E. Digby and Sir Edward Clark. They were chaired by James Bryce, a United States ambassador during the publication of the Belgian report.<sup>6</sup> When specifically examining the members’ occupations preceding the Committee on Alleged German Outrages: Pollock was an English jurist; Fisher, the vice-chancellor of the University of Sheffield; Cox, an editor of *the Edinburgh Review*; Digby, a civil servant and Clark, an English politician.<sup>7</sup> The Armenian report was co-authored by Bryce, who also headed the Belgian report committee, and Arnold Toynbee.<sup>8</sup> Toynbee was a university academic specialising in international affairs and had already written on the Armenian conflict.<sup>9</sup> Both Bryce and Toynbee were publically recognised as Armenophiles, actively engaging in pamphleteering for humanitarian aid to the

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<sup>4</sup> J. Kocka, ‘Comparison and Beyond’, *History and Theory*, vol. 42, no. 1, 2003, pp. 40-44.

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g. Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities*; T. Akçam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*, New York, Metropolitan Books, 2006; J. Abbink, M. Bruijn and K. Walraven, *Rethinking Resistance: Revolt and Violence in African History*, Boston, Brill, 2003.

<sup>6</sup> Horne and Kramer, p. 232.

<sup>7</sup> J. Read, *Atrocity Propaganda, 1914-1919*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1941, pp. 201-202.

<sup>8</sup> A. Nassibian, *Britain and the Armenian Question, 1915-1923*, New York, St. Martin’s Press, 1984, pp. 77-80.

<sup>9</sup> Nassibian, *Armenian Question*, p. 77; See, e.g. A. Toynbee, *Armenian Atrocities: The Murder of a Nation*, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1915.

Armenian population.<sup>10</sup> The Herero report was authored by South-West African civil servants: E.H.M. Gorges, who wrote the preface, and Major Thomas L. O'Reilly and A.J. Waters, who constructed the historical narrative.<sup>11</sup> There are no substantive biographical materials on Jeremy Silvester and Jan-Bart Gewald who provide a brief discussion in the modern introduction to the Herero report.

Limitations of this dissertation relate to viewing the three Blue Books as atrocity propaganda and identifying less obvious comparisons. Moreover, by analysing all three reports there is the potential pitfall of only gaining a general impression of each Blue Book, as compared to accumulating deeper understanding of a single book.<sup>12</sup> To avoid this limitation the study is not comparing the totalities of each Blue Book's findings. Instead, this investigation identifies specific themes that can be compared or contrasted between each Blue Book. The drawback of identifying comparative features that are less obvious has been avoided by applying linguistic analytic tools. In addition, secondary literature on the different Blue Books has provided justification to specific themes identified in a single report, which has then been identified in another source. Critical language analysis, in both written and oral forms, rose in prominence during the later twentieth century. This change was known as the 'linguistic turn'. Since then, there has been increased scrutiny of the construction and meaning of language, where academics have examined authorial intention, audience response and specific tropes in discourse.<sup>13</sup> As 'discourse' is multi-definitional, this dissertation applies Norman Fairclough's conceptualisation of discourse. Fairclough states that 'discourse analysis is [the] analysis of how texts works within sociocultural practice. Such analysis requires attention to textual form [and]... structures of argumentation'.<sup>14</sup> This linguistic tool provides the theoretical basis for understanding how these reports represent or relate more broadly within British society.

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<sup>10</sup> J. Laycock, *Imagining Armenia: Orientalism, Ambiguity and Intervention*, Manchester, New York, Manchester University Press, 2009, pp. 111-112.

<sup>11</sup> Silvester and Gewald, 'Introduction', Herero report, p. xv-xviii. O'Reilly authors twenty-five chapters; Waters authors three.

<sup>12</sup> Kocka, *History and Theory*, p. 1.

<sup>13</sup> B. Ziemann and M. Dobson, 'Introduction', in B. Ziemann and M. Dobson (ed.), *Reading Primary Sources: The Interpretation of Texts from Nineteenth- and Twentieth-century History*, New York, Routledge, 2009, pp. 5-16; For a more extensive discussion of the 'linguistic turn', see, e.g. C. Reinfant's 'Reading texts after the linguistic Turn: Approaches to literary studies and their implication', pp. 37-54, in Ziemann's and Dobson's book.

<sup>14</sup> N. Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, New York, Longman, 1995, p. 7.

This dissertation engages with multiple strands of scholarship and historiography of different topics. One major strand is the British Government's employment of propaganda during the First World War. This subject has already had extensive discussion, where academics during the inter-war period condemned its application. An example is Arthur Ponsonby's polemical and pejorative writings on British atrocity stories during the war as being falsified, sensationalised accounts.<sup>15</sup> However, in recent decades historians have progressed beyond the dismissal of the Blue Books as fabricated accounts to examine both their evidence and rhetoric more rigorously. Scholarship of the Belgian, Armenian and Herero reports share many similarities in both their historiographical schools. The Belgian report has received the largest amount of historiography, where historians John Horne and Alan Kramer have identified that evidence within this report is largely accurate. However, there are also cases where under-representation or over-representation exist.<sup>16</sup> The Armenian report remains highly contentious in modern international politics and historiography. The denialist argument, championed by Guenter Lewy and others, advocates that the Blue Books were falsified propaganda. This stance will not be engaged with due to the groundlessness of his claims. Lewy's claims were contradicted by the later scholarship of Ara Sarafian, who provides an extensive analysis of the Armenian report.<sup>17</sup> Jo Laycock integrates discussion of this report into her analysis of Toynbee's historical narrative.<sup>18</sup> Comparatively the Herero report has seen the least amount of scholarship. Its intended destruction in 1926 was due to fears of its detrimental impact on 'race reconciliation' in South-West Africa.<sup>19</sup> William Louis asserts that this Blue Book has 'little historical value [other] than as an example of [British] wartime propaganda.'<sup>20</sup> By contrast, Gewald and Silvester, the re-publishers of this Blue Book, perceive this report as crucial to understanding 'the legacy of the colonial state' and the 'silenced' voices of the oppressed Herero.<sup>21</sup> This study contributes to modern historiography by examining how different aspects of atrocity propaganda are evident in the text of each Blue Book's historical narratives. Fundamental to this interpretation is Jacques

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<sup>15</sup> Ponsonby, *Falsehood in Wartime*, pp. 128-134.

<sup>16</sup> Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities*, see, e.g. chapters 5 and 6 for discussion of Belgian atrocity stories and discussion of the Belgian Blue Book.

<sup>17</sup> G. Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide*, Salt Lake City, Utah University Press, 2005, pp. 117-127; See, e.g. A. Sarafian's introduction to his uncensored edition of the Armenian Blue Book.

<sup>18</sup> For discussion of the perception of the Armenian nation in Britain during the First World War see, e.g. Laycock, *Imagining Armenia*, chapters 1 and 2.

<sup>19</sup> Silvester and Gewald, 'Introduction', Herero report, p. 32-33.

<sup>20</sup> W. R. Louis, *Great Britain and Germany's Lost Colonies, 1914-1919*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1967, p. ix.

<sup>21</sup> Silvester and Gewald, 'Introduction', p. xxxvii. For a similar stance, see, e.g. M. Townsend, *The Rise and Fall of Germany's Colonial Empire, 1884-1918*, intro. J. Hayes, New York, Macmillan, 1930, p. 23.

Ellul's assertion that for propaganda to establish itself in contemporary discourse, it must attach to pre-existing notions in society.<sup>22</sup> However, this argument contradicts Sarafian's stance that postulates that the Armenian report is not a form of propaganda.<sup>23</sup> In contrast, David Miller states that the British Government wanted to publish this report in America to influence public opinion in an area where America held a missionary presence in order to gain a response.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, Michelle Tusan states that the British Government released this report at an opportune moment as propaganda towards the national war agenda.<sup>25</sup> Another stance is illustrated by Read who asserts that the Armenian report was a 'standard article of propaganda', employing hearsay accounts which question the report's credibility.<sup>26</sup> Common to each report, however, is the initial scholarly dismissal that the report is wartime propaganda. However, this has changed in modern scholarship with evidence revision of each book. This dissertation adds to historiography on early-twentieth-century British Blue Books and First World War propaganda. Furthermore, it illustrates how atrocity propaganda is not simply based on hatred as James Read first conceptualised.<sup>27</sup>

This dissertation is divided into two chapters. The first chapter examines each Blue Book's preface author's statuses and how they helped establish credibility to the respective reports. Preface discussion focuses on the inclusion or omission of methodology regarding 'native', neutral and belligerent evidence. This chapter argues that all prefaces employ similar thematic schemes to justify their claims, illustrating how reports are qualitatively similar even when examining different contexts. The second chapter focuses on the historical narratives of each Blue Book. It discusses how British understanding of civilisation influenced evidence interpretation. The central argument is Edward Said's conceptual framework of the construction of 'others'.<sup>28</sup> This chapter examines how antagonists perceived 'native' or local populations and how the mistreatment of women and children is dealt with in each Blue Book's historical narrative. This section argues that images of women and children were used to 'other' opposing nations away from British cultural standards of civilisation. This paper

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<sup>22</sup> J. Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, trans. [from French] K. Kellen and J. Lerner, intro. K. Kellen, New York, Vintage Books, p. 1973, pp. 38-39.

<sup>23</sup> Sarafian, 'Introduction', Armenian report, p. ix.

<sup>24</sup> D. Miller, 'The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire: A history of the "Blue Book"', *RUSI Journal*, vol. 51, no. 4, 2008, p. 39.

<sup>25</sup> M. Tusan, 'James Bryce's Blue Book as Evidence', *Journal of Levantine Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2015, pp. 38-45.

<sup>26</sup> Read, *Atrocity Propaganda*, pp. 216-222.

<sup>27</sup> Read, p. 5.

<sup>28</sup> For an extensive discussion of the construction of 'self' or personal identity see, e.g. E. Said, 'Afterword', in *Orientalism*, New York, Vintage Books, 1979, pp. 329-352.



demonstrates that British Blue Books are not unique, but employ similar thematic structure and literary devices when representing events in different cultural contexts.

# Chapter One

## Prefaces and their Justifications

The Belgian, Armenian and Herero British Blue Book reports' prefaces share similar language features and themes relating to both report validity and the authors' impartiality. Common to all reports is how the author's authority and prestige positively affected contemporary perceptions of the Blue Books. In examining the objectives and emotive language used in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Blue Books, it becomes apparent that these Blue Books share numerous features with Roger Casement's 1904 Blue Book and the 1847 Blue Books on Welsh education.<sup>29</sup> The Belgian and Armenian reports' discussions of methodology and its application to 'native' evidence in each preface illustrates the authors' awareness of potential criticisms of using such materials. This is a clear difference with the Herero report. When the Belgian, Armenian and Herero prefaces' authors discuss evidence derived from belligerent and neutral sources, they all assert that the most explicit evidence was extracted from such origins. The rhetorical use of scepticism is also demonstrated in each preface, where respective authors use this device to both justify their arguments and counteract possible criticisms of the evidence. This chapter examines how the author's public position was conducive to greater audience acceptance of findings represented in the Blue Book's evidence. Moreover, this chapter identifies tropes that the authors use to justify their claims in the different prefaces.

Looking at nineteenth- and twentieth-century Blue Books more broadly, there are similar rhetorical tropes evident when comparing the Belgian, Armenian and Herero reports with Casement's report on the Belgian Administration and Congo Africa as well as the 1847 Welsh education Blue Books. A similarity that all these Blue Books share is that each preface outlines explicitly the report's purpose within an impartiality framework. With regard to genre, all reports emphasise their connection to the British Parliament and Crown. This is not a superficial connection but a deliberate association with an institution of power. In discussing the Welsh Blue Book, Gwyneth Roberts states that:

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<sup>29</sup> The official name of Casement's report is 'Correspondence and Report from his Majesty's Consul at Boma Respecting the Administration of the Independence of the Congo, 1904'. This report will be referred to as 'Casement report'; The official name of the Welsh education report is 'Reports of the Commissioners of Enquiry into the State of Education in Wales, 1847'. These reports will be referred to as 'Welsh Blue Books'.

The authority and claims to objectivity the report derived from its connection with the Government Parliament and the Crown... [The report's] official status and the social and political background against which it was produced meant that its publication marked a watershed in officially recognized images of themselves.<sup>30</sup>

This statement is also illustrated by Robert's analysis of the Welsh reports.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, where the text is derived from is equally as important as the status of the authors in its impact as effective propaganda. Fundamentally, reports originating from the British Government hold greater credibility than reports derived from a more informal source. Roberts states that the Welsh Blue Books illustrate 'great confidence in the authority and completeness of their own judgment' as they clearly outline the parameters of their inquiry and 'the volume of the material they use and the amount of detail they include.'<sup>32</sup> This is overtly illustrated in the preface containing explicit instructions on how research was conducted, emphasising the importance of accuracy, as 'circumstances ... permit.'<sup>33</sup> Like the Welsh Blue Books, the Casement report also includes dialogue on robust research methodology. For this reason, the inclusion of methodology in the reports' opening dialogue, which was previously discussed in the Belgian, Armenian and Herero Blue Books, is significant as it outlines to the audience what parameters were used in the study and emphasises researcher impartiality.

In examining the primary figures and language behind the British Blue Books' construction in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it becomes clear that the Belgian, Armenian and Herero reports share many similarities with contemporary governmental reports. Discussing the Belgian report, British cabinet minister Sir John Simon states that 'the value of this investigation entirely depends upon the known impartiality and author of those who compose the Committee.'<sup>34</sup> This statement originates from Simon's personal correspondence, in which Simon invites Bryce to chair the committee on investigating the Belgian events.<sup>35</sup> Simon's statement highlights two elements intrinsic to this chapter's discussion: the authors'

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<sup>30</sup> G. Roberts, *The Language of the Blue Books: The Perfect Instrument of Empire*, Cardiff, London, University of Wales Press, 1998, p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> Roberts, *The Language of the Blue Books*, p. 4; See, e.g. Chapter 3 'Official Language' for a more extensive discussion of the authority of Government reports.

<sup>32</sup> Roberts, p. 59.

<sup>33</sup> British Parliament, 'Instructions', Welsh Blue Books, p. i.

<sup>34</sup> T. Wilson, 'Lord Bryce's Investigation into Alleged German Atrocities in Belgium, 1914-1915', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 14, 1969, p. 373.

<sup>35</sup> J. Lipkes, *Rehearsals: The German army in Belgium, August 1914*, Leuven, Leuven University Press, 2007, p. 690.

statuses and report validity. Furthermore, Simon's states that the 'value' of Belgian report was contingent upon public perception of the book's authors. This highlights a fundamental component of each Blue Book. When a given work is written by authors of significant public standing, it imbues works with increased credibility because of their association. The Bryce Committee consisted of the prominent figures Pollock, Clarke, Cox, Fisher, Hopkinson and Digby, all academics trained in law.<sup>36</sup> Each figure was well known to the public, and held positions of authority.<sup>37</sup> These figures' standing inclined the British public to accept the Belgian report's findings. This use of prominent figures illustrates the sociological concept of deference to authority. This theory states that authorities legitimise their own rhetoric through appearing in positions of power, where instructions are 'voluntarily obeyed by the public, even though the public does not necessarily agree with them or [their] view'.<sup>38</sup>

Use of public figures to enhance the credibility of government reports is also illustrated in the Armenian Blue Book. Bryce, chair of the Belgian Committee, is also one of the co-authors of the Armenian report. Toynbee and Bryce were publically recognized as Armenophiles, with wide academic and political credentials. Michelle Tusan states that Toynbee and Bryce's public standing 'boosted the Blue Book's status as an impartial documentary assessment and lent its weight to its findings'.<sup>39</sup> Similar sentiments are also shared by Horne and Kramer, who state that Bryce's credentials as an 'academic historian, lawyer, and educationalist who had studied at Heidelberg as well as Oxford' made the Belgian report more believable to its British audience.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, Bryce had been an ambassador to the United States. Sarafian asserts that this association is crucial as the 'primary impetus for the British Government's Blue Book on the Armenian Genocide' was the hope to get America involved in the war.<sup>41</sup> Validation of the Armenian report was further bolstered by Bryce's comment in the report's preface: 'In order to test the soundness of my own conclusions as to the value of the evidence, I have submitted it to the judgment of... [men of] the highest respect'.<sup>42</sup> One of these people was Fisher, a British politician and historian, who wrote a section on the treatment of women and children in the Belgian Report.<sup>43</sup> The association of prestigious

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<sup>36</sup> C. Roetter, *Psychological Warfare*, London, Batsford, 1974, p. 47.

<sup>37</sup> Refer to the introduction of this dissertation where the Bryce Committee's occupations are outlined, p. 4.

<sup>38</sup> T. Tyler and M. Krochik, 'Deference to Authority as a Basis for Managing Ideological Conflict', *Chicago-Kent Law Review*, vol. 88, iss. 2, 2013, pp. 434-435.

<sup>39</sup> Tusan, *Journal of Levantine Studies*, p. 37.

<sup>40</sup> Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities*, p. 232.

<sup>41</sup> A. Sarafian, 'Introduction', Armenian report, p. xviii.

<sup>42</sup> Bryce, 'Preface', Armenian report, p. xxvii.

<sup>43</sup> Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities*, p. 233.

figures to increase the authority of the Blue Books is also illustrated in the Herero report. Like the Belgian and Armenian reports, the people who compiled the report's evidence were all legally trained and held positions of authority. Gorges was a civil administrator of South-West Africa.<sup>44</sup> O'Reilly was an African Supreme Court attorney and a military magistrate.<sup>45</sup> Waters was a Crown Prosecutor.<sup>46</sup> Gorges even mentions his standing alongside the other authors' careers in the preface.<sup>47</sup> Since the authors of each Blue Book are all legally trained, acceptance of the three Blue Books in their different contexts can partially be attributed to the prominent figures that authored them. There is a clear connection with the deference to power as each preface author explicitly defines the other authors' occupations in each Blue Book.

Both the Armenian and Belgian prefaces illustrate extensive discussion of 'native' evidence. Such discussion is not evident in the Herero Blue Book's preface, making this report less authoritative. Reinhart Kössler states that 'African voices' were not present in this report, but mediated by the report's authors: Gorges, O'Reilly and Waters.<sup>48</sup> Kössler indicates that the original draft included a chapter with 75 'African voices.'<sup>49</sup> He further states that the '[o]mission of this essential contextualisation... is tantamount to reification, inferring authenticity from the mere fact that the speakers are Africans.'<sup>50</sup> Therefore, discussion of 'native' evidence was not included in the Herero report as their 'authentic voices' were not present. When Gorges describes the evidence more generally, he states that '[t]he time available for the collection of material into this report and for the careful collation of that material has been brief; but, notwithstanding, a large amount... contains irrefutable proofs of the gross ineptitude'.<sup>51</sup> This contrasts the methodical, measured statements from both Belgian and Armenian Reports, where the preface authors' carefully outlined meticulous evidence processing procedures before its employment into the respective reports.

In contrast to the Herero report, the Belgian and Armenian reports include 'native' testimony and this is discussed extensively in the prefaces. Superficially, the inclusion of methodology

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<sup>44</sup> O'Reilly, 'Part One: Natives and German Administration', Herero report, p. 57.

<sup>45</sup> O'Reilly, 'Part One: Natives and German Administration', Herero report, p. 57.

<sup>46</sup> O'Reilly, 'Part One: Natives and German Administration', Herero report, p. 57.

<sup>47</sup> O'Reilly, 'Part One: Natives and German Administration', Herero report, p. 18.

<sup>48</sup> R. Kössler, 'Review Article: Sjambok or Cane? Reading the Blue Book', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, vol. 30, no. 3, 2004, pp. 706-708. For a discussion of the Herero Blue Book and modern politics, see e.g.

Kössler, 'Entangled History and Politics: Negotiating the Past Between Namibia and Germany', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, vol. 23, no. 3, 2008, pp. 313-339.

<sup>49</sup> Kössler, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, p. 706.

<sup>50</sup> Kössler, p. 706.

<sup>51</sup> Gorges, 'Preface', Herero report, pp. 7-8.

and its relation to evidence is standard practice for a government report. However, by discussing an extensive evidence scrutiny this counteracts possible future criticism of the employment of such material and imbues the Belgian and Armenian reports with greater legitimacy. The Bryce Committee opens discussion of Belgian evidence by stating that:

It is natural to ask whether much of the evidence given, especially by the Belgian witnesses, may not be due to excitement and overstrained emotions, and whether, apart from deliberate falsehood, persons who mean to speak the truth may not in a more or less hysterical condition have been imagining themselves to have seen the things which they say they saw.<sup>52</sup>

This rhetorical question disarms the audience's potential disbelief of what evidence is contained in the document. Such a literary device is employed to convince audiences that material included has been tested scrupulously to prevent potentially bias. In this statement, the terms 'falsehood' and 'truth' are juxtaposed to illustrate that it is natural to view this evidence sceptically. The Armenian Blue Book includes a similar statement, where Bryce asserts that '[i]t is true that some of the witnesses are Armenians, whose testimony, if otherwise unconfirmed, might be regarded as liable to be over-coloured'.<sup>53</sup> However, he also states that '[n]one of the worst cruelties rest on native evidence alone'.<sup>54</sup> By including these comments in the preface, Bryce is substantiating the report's employment of material that the audience may perceive as inherently unbiased. In the case of criticism for the inclusion of 'native' testimony, both prefaces affirm that the most severe accounts were confirmed by the 'cumulative' value of the evidence when read as a whole and by belligerent evidence sources like German diaries or 'confessional of the criminals themselves'.<sup>55</sup> Both the Belgian and Armenian prefaces include extensive discussion of methodology and its application to evidence to disarm potential criticisms and provide both authority and impartiality to their audience. In contrast to this, the Herero report lacks discussion of 'native' evidence. By not acknowledging these potential shortfalls, the report's authors leave this Blue Book open to criticisms.<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, this omission leads an audience to question the impartial nature of the 'native' evidence. In summary, the Belgian and Armenian reports inclusion of discussion

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<sup>52</sup> 'Preface', Belgian report, p. 6.

<sup>53</sup> Bryce, 'Preface', Armenian report, p. xxix.

<sup>54</sup> Bryce, 'Preface', Armenian report, p. xxv.

<sup>55</sup> 'Preface', Belgian report, p. 7; Bryce, 'Preface', Armenian Report, pp. xxvi-xxvii.

<sup>56</sup> See e.g. Kössler, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, pp. 703-708.

regarding potential pitfalls of employing ‘native’ evidence illustrates that the authors were wary of potential criticism of their source choice. In contrast, the Herero report lacks this dialogue. Instead, Gorges focuses on German native policy, making this preface comparatively less convincing and also open to criticism for including potentially biased ‘native’ evidence.

The Belgian, Armenian and Herero reports all state that most atrocity accounts rest on neutral and belligerent evidence. Discussion of evidence is employed to convince their audience of the scrupulous treatment of testimony and the originating source. In addition, stating that evidence is derived from a source different to the indigenous people removes potential criticism that inherently biased accounts are being included. It can be inferred that this discussion is included in all three Blue Books’ prefaces with the purpose of convincing the audience, in particular the British public, of each report’s impartiality. An example of this is provided in the Bryce Committee’s preface to the Belgian report:

In one respect, indeed [the German diaries] are the most weighty part of the evidence, because they proceed from a hostile source and are not open to any such criticism on the ground of bias as might be applied to Belgian testimony.<sup>57</sup>

However as historians Trevor Wilson, Horne, and Kramer state, the diaries are quintessential evidence to the lurid accounts, and are only actually used in one instance that actually includes the extreme brutality of ‘rape’ or murder of children.<sup>58</sup> As the Bryce Committee only used this source once, it can be inferred that they are including this statement for its influential purpose to convince audiences that most evidence was derived from objective sources. Similar to the Belgian Blue Book, the Armenian report’s preface includes a statement that neutral and belligerent evidence cannot be questioned:

I [Bryce] may say that most of them, and nearly all of those who belong to neutral or belligerent countries are persons entitled to confidence in respect of their character and standing, and are, moreover, persons who have no conceivable motive for inventing or perverting facts, because they are (with extremely few exceptions) either

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<sup>57</sup> ‘Preface’, Belgian report, p. 5.

<sup>58</sup> Wilson, *Journal of Contemporary History*, p. 372; J. Horne and A. Kramer, ‘German “Atrocities” and Franco-German Opinion, 1914: The Evidence of German Soldiers’ Diaries’, *The Journal of Modern History*, vol. 66, no. 1, 1994, p. 2.

neutrals with no national or personal pecuniary interests involved or else German subjects.<sup>59</sup>

This statement bolsters the robustness of neutrals and belligerents Bryce received information from. The personal pronoun 'I' infers Bryce's personal 'confidence' in these people and their evidence. As previously identified, Bryce's strength of character imbued the Belgian report with validity and this same process is represented in the paragraph of the Armenian report's preface. By Bryce stating his faith in the evidence's origin, he is using his own well-known public status in British discourse to provide authority to the testimony of the Armenian Blue Book.

Like the Belgian and Armenian reports, the Herero Blue Book's preface also includes a statement that the most brutal evidence is derived from belligerent sources. This is illustrated when Gorges states that:

The words of the [German] Governor in the letter contain what will probably be considered as the most damning piece of evidence of all that has been collected as to the point to which the ill-treatment of natives have been carried.<sup>60</sup>

By stating that evidence comes from an official source, a governor, Gorges illustrates that the ill-treatment of Herero people was integral in many levels of German colonial society. However, the letter in question is less dramatic than Gorges implies, as he states that if Europeans 'persist in ill-treating their native servants in a brutal manner [they] shall no longer be supplied with native labour'.<sup>61</sup> This is not 'damning' evidence, but a less dramatic acknowledgement of the selfish outcome for colonials if they continue their behaviour. In comparison to the Belgian and Armenian reports, the preface's author states that shocking evidence is derived from a belligerent source. All prefaces include similar statements of how the most barbaric atrocities were derived from neutral or belligerent sources. While this was not always true, as demonstrated by the Belgian and Herero reports, its intended effect on the audience was to increase report validity. By each preface's author stating that explicit

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<sup>59</sup> Bryce, 'Preface', Armenian report, p. xxi.

<sup>60</sup> Gorges, 'Preface', Herero report, p. 13.

<sup>61</sup> The Imperial Governor of G.S.W.A Windhuk, *To all Magistrates Secret and Personal*, 31 May 1912, cited in O'Reilly, Herero Blue Book, p. 205.



accounts were derived from a non-native source, they are endorsing the impartial nature of the Blue Books' evidence.

Fundamental to effectively transmitting propagandistic ideas is the need to establish audience credibility. Credibility is established in each Blue Book through the deliberate application of claims of validity and scepticism. The theme of scepticism is prominent in all reports. Scepticism is used as both a defence and self-justification to potential criticisms applied to these reports. Discussing the philosophy of scepticism and its purpose in discourse, Anthony Grayling states that 'despite traditional appearances, scepticism is not well described as doubt or denial', but is actually central to epistemic claims in that discourse.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, scepticism is fundamental to validating one's own argument. The introduction of scepticism into an argument serves as a 'justification practice', which invokes support of the claims being made.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, scepticism is not introduced to challenge an argument, but to validate it. This employment of epistemic claims, with regard to validation, forms a crucial component of all three Blue Books. The Belgian report explicitly states that the Bryce Committee, who were compiling and scrutinizing the evidence, were initially sceptical, but eventually changed attitudes of disbelief into belief. An example of this change is evident in the report: 'But the further we [The Bryce Committee] went and the more evidence we examined so much the more was our scepticism reduced.'<sup>64</sup> This comment explicitly asserts that Committee scepticism was overcome by thorough examination. Such comments are highly influential towards the audience's perception of evidence: if evidence strength can convince barristers, it must also be strong enough for the British audience to suspend their own potential scepticism. Furthermore, it is also established that even before the committee received the testimony, it had already been scrutinised by lawyers.<sup>65</sup> The Armenian Blue Book's preface shares a similar approach to scepticism: 'But the evidence of these letters and reports will bear any scrutiny and overpower any scepticism. Genuineness is established beyond question.'<sup>66</sup> Like the authors of the Belgian report, Bryce employs scepticism to validate the Armenians Blue Book's evidence. Scepticism is also illustrated in the Herero report when Gorges discusses how it would be wrong to return the control of 'native' tribes to the German Government:

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<sup>62</sup> A. Grayling, *Scepticism and the Possibility of Knowledge*, New York, Continuum, 2008, pp. 172-174.

<sup>63</sup> Grayling, *Scepticism*, p. 172.

<sup>64</sup> 'Preface', Belgian report, pp. 6-7.

<sup>65</sup> 'Preface', Belgian report, pp. 6-7.

<sup>66</sup> Bryce, 'Preface', Armenian report, p. xxx.

Enough should be found in this report to convince the most confirmed sceptic of the unsuitability of the Germans to control natives, and also to show him what can be expected if the unfortunate natives of this part of African are ever again handed back to the former *régime*.<sup>67</sup>

Similar to the Belgian and Armenian reports, a statement of scepticism is intended as a claim of validation. However, Gorges' use of scepticism contrasts the Belgian and Armenian Report prefaces as he is also using it to address the Herero Blue Book's intended purpose of removing German colonial land claims.<sup>68</sup> While Gorges employs scepticism in a different manner, this does not make the preface less convincing. Examining an early-twentieth-century discussion of this theme, contemporary Wellington House columnist, H. Peterson, states that:

Even in papers hostile to the Allies, there is not the slightest attempt to impugn the correctness of the facts alleged. Lord Bryce's prestige in America put scepticism out of the question, and many leading articles begin on this note.<sup>69</sup>

As alleged by Peterson, the use of validation and scepticism in contemporary British discourse differentiates Allied reports from the belligerents'. In addition, he states that this became common in 'leading articles', inferring that the British Government was aware of its influential public effect. Thus, the introduction of scepticism into each Blue Book's prefaces was crucial in creating epistemic claims and serving as an additional layer of validation to each report's influence on its audience. All reports used the theme of scepticism, its role in validation of arguments and convincing its audience of the evidence strength within the respective reports.

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<sup>67</sup> Gorges, 'Preface', Herero report, pp. 17-18.

<sup>68</sup> Gorges, 'Preface', Herero report, pp. 17-18.

<sup>69</sup> H. Peterson, *American Press Résumé's*, May 27, 1915, p. 58, cited in P. Buitenhuis (ed.), *The Great War of Words: British, American and Canadian Propaganda and Fiction, 1914-1933*, Vancouver, University of British Columbia Press, 1987, p. 27; Peterson has also written on propaganda, looking at Britain's propaganda and its influence on the United States during their period of neutrality in World War I. For this discussion, see, e.g. Peterson's *Propaganda for War: The Campaign Against American Neutrality, 1914-1917*, 1<sup>st</sup> edn, Norman, Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Press, 1939.

Crucial to evidence discussion in these Blue Books is use of the pejorative terms ‘oriental’ and ‘native’. Use of racialised language is more explicable in the Herero and Armenian reports due to their non-Western contexts. Examining the First World War, Andrea Rosengarten asserts that while contemporary Europeans viewed violence as a ‘reversion to barbarism’, this was actually an expression of racism that transformed into excessive violence.<sup>70</sup> Rosengarten examines German military violence against non-combatants during the First World War, looking at how racialised language differentiated between who and who not to attack.<sup>71</sup> Racialised language is exemplified in the Herero report when the word ‘citizen appears only once’ to describe German nationality.<sup>72</sup> Rosengarten further states that O’Reilly ‘reserved the language of division between “combatants” and “non-combatants”’ for Europeans, and not the Herero people.<sup>73</sup> In both examples cited, Rosengarten states that the Herero people are denied citizenship status because that implies civilisation; instead they were assigned under a single heading; ‘native’. This criticism of O’Reilly’s language neglects to mention that the Herero people uphold European understandings of war and civilisation. This will be discussed in greater detail later examining the ‘civilised’ Herero.<sup>74</sup> Casual racism is also identified in the Armenian report when Bryce provides supporting documentation from other prominent figures attesting to evidence’s credibility. This is exemplified in a letter from Gilbert Murray affirming testimonies’ scrutiny: ‘I realise that in times of persecution passions run high, that oriental races tend to use hyperbolic language’.<sup>75</sup> In ‘Letter from Four German Missionaries’, Armenians are described as ‘natives of Aleppo’.<sup>76</sup> In both examples, Armenians are treated as ‘natives’ and ‘orient’ with both terms carrying derogatory connotations. Use of racialised language is also identified by Said, who asserts that the relationship between West and East positions the former as ‘superior’,<sup>77</sup> whereas the latter is ‘irrational, depraved’ and inferior.<sup>78</sup> Similarly, Stuart Hall states that Europeans treated ‘non-European cultures as different and inferior’, while simultaneously perceiving themselves as

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<sup>70</sup> A. Rosengarten, “‘A Most Gruesome Sight’: Colonial Warfare, Racial Thought, and the Question of ‘Radicalization’ during the First World War in German South-West Africa (Namibia), *The Journal of the Historical Association*, vol. 101, iss. 346, 2016, p. 427.

<sup>71</sup> Rosengarten, *The Journal of the Historical Association*, p. 425.

<sup>72</sup> Rosengarten, p. 435; O’Reilly, ‘Part One: Natives and German Administration’, Herero report, p. 230.

<sup>73</sup> Rosengarten, p. 435.

<sup>74</sup> Refer to p. 27 for this discussion.

<sup>75</sup> G. Murray, ‘Letter from Professor Gilbert Murray, Regius Professor of Greek in the University of Oxford, To Viscount Bryce’, Armenian Report, p. xxxi.

<sup>76</sup> Letter from Four German Missionaries, ‘Letter, Dated Aleppo, 8<sup>th</sup> October, 1915, From Four Members of the German Missions Staff in Turkey to the Imperial German Ministry of Foreign Affairs at Berlin’, Armenian report, p. xxxiii.

<sup>77</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn, London, Routledge and Keagen Paul, 2003, p. 7.

<sup>78</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 40-41.

enlightened.<sup>79</sup> Such unequal relationships demonstrate judgmental connotations of ‘oriental’ and ‘native’ in the Armenian and Herero reports. Racism in the Belgian report is less explicit. The Bryce Committee does not apply terms like ‘native’ to describe Belgians because of their European descent. Nonetheless, the committee still ascribes specific tenets to their national character when the report discusses how ‘it is natural to ask’ whether Belgian evidence is coloured by the ‘excitement and overstrained emotions’ of the Belgian people.<sup>80</sup> This implicitly aligns Belgian temperament with a child-like status. This analogy reaffirms notions of defenceless Belgians being invaded by barbaric Huns. The paradox of describing Herero and Armenians as civilised, yet inferior, will be discussed later, in the section on the ‘noble savage’, and the relationship between Christianity and Armenian identity.<sup>81</sup>

Keith Watenpaugh identifies that the Casement report illustrates four distinct components: the ‘capacious definition of punishment – one that goes beyond starvation or massacre to include forms of social, legal, political ... [and] cultural suffering’; the employment of ‘history and social science to categorize the victims and perpetrators of suffering in ethnic, racial and religious terms’; the equation of humanity and civilisation; and lastly, the authors offer ‘the parlance of reform’ to aid the oppressed population.<sup>82</sup> Many of these components are also true of the Belgian, Armenian and Herero reports. Each report contains extensive discussion of punishment, such as the Belgian report’s accounts of bayoneting children and mass public rape.<sup>83</sup> Religious categorisation is demonstrated by Toynbee’s extensive dialogue on Christianity,<sup>84</sup> and by racial differentiation of German colonials describing the Herero as ‘baboons’.<sup>85</sup> In the Belgian, Armenian and Herero reports there is clear association between humanity and civilisation. Each report offers solutions to the atrocities that led to the reason for the report’s creation. This is demonstrated by the Herero report stating that control of African tribes should not be returned to the German administration,<sup>86</sup> and in the Armenian report when Toynbee states that Ottoman Empire should not have dominion over its Christian

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<sup>79</sup> S. Hall, ‘The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power’, in S. Schech and J. Haggis (ed.), *Development: A Cultural Studies Reader*, Oxford, Malden, MA, Blackwell, 2002, p. 59.

<sup>80</sup> ‘Preface’, Belgian report, p. 6.

<sup>81</sup> Refer to p. 25 for this discussion.

<sup>82</sup> K. Watenpaugh, *Bread from Stones: The Middle East and the Making of Modern Humanitarianism*, 1<sup>st</sup> edn, Oakland, California, University of California Press, 2005, pp. 59-60.

<sup>83</sup> [Fisher], ‘Part Two: Offences committed against non-combatant civilians during the conduct of war generally’, Belgian report, pp. 47-50.

<sup>84</sup> Toynbee, ‘Historical Summary’, Armenian report, pp. 593-607.

<sup>85</sup> Gorges, ‘Preface’, Herero report, p. 16.

<sup>86</sup> Gorges, ‘Preface’, Herero report, p. 18.

subjects.<sup>87</sup> Therefore, Watenpaugh's description of narrative components in the Casement report is also true of narratives in the Belgian, Armenian and Herero reports. This is significant as it illustrates how different authors integrate similar themes and tropes to convey their cases.

A further thematic comparison between the Casement and Herero reports is when both authors discuss colonial rule. In each instance British colonialism is championed as superior. Casement states that natives 'place the utmost trust and confidence in the British officers.'<sup>88</sup> He states that the Belgian administration have engaged in a 'systematic regime "of cruelty and oppression"' of Congolese natives.<sup>89</sup> The Herero report echoes similar descriptions. Gorges states that German colonists in South-West Africa have 'been a failure',<sup>90</sup> while also stating that British colonial conduct mediated German colonialism in British-controlled territory.<sup>91</sup> By comparing reports, even with different topics, it becomes evident that the British Blue Books share similar rhetorical tropes and themes. The appearance of these tropes is significant as it shows that the respective authors employed similar literary mechanisms to convince audiences of their report's credibility and the validity of the underlying arguments.

The Belgian, Armenian and Herero Blue Books' prefaces share many similarities. However, there also exist a few nuanced differences. Each report's authority in early twentieth-century Britain can be partially attributed to the prestige and legal associations of the authors of the respective Blue Books. When comparatively analysing these British Blue Books, it becomes evident that common to all reports is the objective tone in prefaces to frame the report's main evidence. The Belgian and Armenians reports' discussion of the treatment of 'native' evidence illustrates how authors saw it essential to include the robust evidence processing. In contrast, the Herero report lacks such discussion, making a less convincing preface. When comparing the treatment and methodology of the Belgian, Armenian and Herero reports there is a common theme that the most explicit atrocity accounts were derived from enemy sources. Inclusion of this methodology distances the authors from possible biases and increased the appearance of impartiality. The deliberate employment of scepticism by the different prefaces' authors is a form of defence and validation to potential future criticisms for bias.

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<sup>87</sup> Toynbee, 'Historical Summary', Armenian report, pp. 652-653.

<sup>88</sup> R. Casement, 'Preface', Roger Casement Congo report, p. 2.

<sup>89</sup> R. Casement, 'Preface', Roger Casement Congo Report, p. 9.

<sup>90</sup> Gorges, 'Preface', Herero report, p. 15.

<sup>91</sup> Gorges, 'Preface', Herero report, p. 15.

Moreover, scepticism justifies testimony impartiality used in the different Blue Books. The Blue Books are all easily comparable with minor differences overshadowed by underlying and explicit similarities. Furthermore, even when examining other reports, such as the Welsh Blue Books, these similarities are more evident. This is significant because it suggests that all British Blue Books employ a similar set of tropes and themes when discussing distinct and different topics. British Blue Book reports may be structured differently, but thematically and rhetorically they include similar tropes and themes to convince audiences of the reports' underlying arguments.

## Chapter Two

### British Understandings of Civilisation and Depictions of the Maltreatment of Women and Children.

During wartime it is natural that nations contrast their enemies against their own philosophies and value systems. Steffen Bruendel asserts that this differentiation engenders an oppositional binary, where governments and populations negatively compare opposing nations against themselves. This polarising discourse is demonstrated during World War I when various forms of propaganda were employed and distributed by the British Government as vehicles conveying multiple explicit and implicit messages. An underlying narrative of British atrocity propaganda during this war period was the social and political construction of the constitutive other.<sup>92</sup> Othering theory contends that when an individual, group or nation socially constructs their own identities, they also form an identity of their opposite or enemy via the process of ‘othering’.<sup>93</sup> In the Belgian, Armenian and Herero reports authors contrast values of their own society against the antagonists, which explicitly demonstrates the concept and identification of othering. This concept is illustrated in each report as the outcome of ‘imbalanced binary distinctions’, derived from the concept of the ‘linguistic turn’.<sup>94</sup> This dualism is identified when authors, or compilers, discuss enemy soldiers’ descriptions and their war conduct. In addition, each author also provides explicit descriptions of maltreatment of women and children to other the enemy as being barbaric and uncivilised.

Many historians have identified the significance of othering in First World War atrocity propaganda. However, this theory has not sufficiently been applied to comparative studies of official British Government documents; only to mass media propaganda like visual representations in posters or newspaper satirical cartoons. Initially, the identification of othering is demonstrated by Lasswell’s assertion that atrocity propaganda was employed to foment and fuel hatred of the ‘people against the enemy ... representing the opposing nation

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92 S. Bruendel, ‘Othering/Atrocity Propaganda’, in *1914-18-online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*, U. Daniel, P. Gatrell, O. Janz, H. Jones, J. Keene, A. Kramer and B. Nasson (ed.), issued by Freie Universität Berlin, 8 October 2014, (accessed 13 June 2016). DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15463/ie1418.10397.e>

93 See, e.g., E. Said, *Orientalism*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn, London, Routledge and Keagen Paul, 2003, p. 332; L. Colley, ‘Britishness and Otherness’, *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 31, no. 4, 1992, p. 324-329.

94 Ziemann and Dobson, ‘Introduction’, *Reading Primary Resources*, p. 7.

as a menacing, murderous, aggressor.’<sup>95</sup> Lasswell identifies an inherent tenet of warring nations; the polarisation of the enemy as a lower barbaric species. Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker state that this perception of enemies as primitive became an essential element of wartime propaganda.<sup>96</sup> This stance is reflected by Lasswell’s contemporary, Read, who asserts that both the British media and the Bryce Committee’s Report attempted to brand the German Government as an ‘inferior branch of the human race.’<sup>97</sup> In modern historiography, David Welch states that World War I challenged the *status quo* of British society, where their national identity was being threatened by ‘alien and hostile cultures in what can be describe as a phobic fear of the “Other.”’<sup>98</sup> In summary, atrocity propaganda was used to provoke feelings of hatred, whilst also employing othering as a way to justify on-going war actions.

The concept of the ‘other’ is evident in the Belgian report when the Bryce Committee discusses German soldiers’ war conduct. Throughout this report the German army’s barbarism is evident with its lack of gender or age discrimination when attacking the Belgian population, especially in Liege. During this section there are minimal witness accounts. Instead, there is commentary to describe excessive acts of violence and unnecessary killings.<sup>99</sup> Bryce describes ‘indiscriminate shooting of civilians of both sexes’, the killing of clergymen, systematic burning of homes, looting, mutilation and rape.<sup>100</sup> These extreme levels of brutality contradict the British ideal of a just war. The just war theory states that conflict is carried out against soldiers, not civilians, and those unnecessary acts of terror such as property destruction should be avoided.<sup>101</sup> This concept is directly contradicted by the Germany army’s actions described by the Bryce Committee. Like the Armenian and Herero reports, atrocity narratives in the Belgian report are fundamental to constructing the antagonists of war as ‘savage’ and ‘uncivilised’, thus the ‘other’. Also employed are highly emotive symbols of rape when describing German actions against Belgium people: ‘One

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<sup>95</sup> Lasswell, *Propaganda Technique in the World War*, p. 195.

<sup>96</sup> S. Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *1914-1918 Understanding the Great War*, trans. C. Temerson, London, Profile Books, 2002, p. 46.

<sup>97</sup> Read, *Atrocity Propaganda*, p. 17.

<sup>98</sup> D. Welch, ‘War Aims and the “Big Ideas”’, in D. Welch and J. Fox (ed.), *Justifying War: propaganda, politics and the modern age*, Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, p. 74.

<sup>99</sup> ‘Part One: The Conduct of the German Troops in Belgium towards the Civilian population’, Belgian report, p. 13.

<sup>100</sup> ‘Part One: The Conduct of the German Troops in Belgium towards the Civilian population’, Belgian report, pp. 12-16.

<sup>101</sup> Laycock, *Imagining Armenia*, p. 110; N. Gullace, ‘Sexual Violence and Family Honour: British Propaganda and International Law during the First World War’, vol. 102, no. 3, 1997, p. 715.



witness saw a German soldier cut a woman's breasts after he had murdered her, and saw many other dead bodies of women in the streets'.<sup>102</sup> The association between sexual atrocities in Belgium is further extended in the term, 'the Rape of Belgium', which was widely used to describe the German invasion.<sup>103</sup> Therefore, the German invasion of Belgium and their subsequent treatment of its population, contradicted the British ideal of a just war, resulting in the othering of the German Government. This illustrates that the Belgian report cannot be regarded as simply falsified atrocity propaganda, but evidence of othering and its relationship to British understanding of civilisation and European concepts of war.

The process of othering manifests in the Armenian report when Toynbee describes how the Ottoman government perceives Armenians as 'Rayah' (cattle). He states this 'one word sums up their irremediable position; that they were not treated as citizens because they were not even treated as men.'<sup>104</sup> The dehumanisation of Armenians makes them devoid of rights entitled to all human beings. In comparison, Toynbee attempts to reconcile Armenians as a cultural other by consistently reinforcing that population as 'Near East' and as upholders of the dominant Western religion, Christianity. This is apparent when he discusses Armenian geographical distinctions, stating that Armenia bordered on Western and Eastern hemispheres.<sup>105</sup> Traditionally Armenia is perceived as Eastern, but Toynbee states that it can be classified as an 'in-between nation'.<sup>106</sup> Laycock reflects on this stance, stating that Toynbee identifies Armenians with "'self' or the civilised European World."<sup>107</sup> Toynbee establishes this connection within his first sentence of his historical summary: 'The War has brought us into a new relation with Armenia.'<sup>108</sup> Throughout this section there are many examples of Armenia and Britain being 'on the same side, striving for the same end.'<sup>109</sup> Before the publication of the Armenian report, British perceptions of the Ottoman Empire and Armenians were mixed. Joseph Heller states that Sultan Abdul-Hamid was widely condemned by British politics.<sup>110</sup> This perception changed with the rise of the Young

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<sup>102</sup> 'Part One: The Conduct of the German Troops in Belgium towards the Civilian population,' Belgian report, p. 26.

<sup>103</sup> N. Gullace, *The Blood of our sons: men, women, and the renegotiations of British citizenship during the Great War*, 1<sup>st</sup> edn, New York, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2002, p. 24.

<sup>104</sup> Toynbee, 'Historical Narrative', Armenian Report, p. 617.

<sup>105</sup> Toynbee, 'Historical Summary', Armenian report, p. 607.

<sup>106</sup> Toynbee, 'Historical Summary', Armenian report, p. 595.

<sup>107</sup> Laycock, *Imagining Armenia*, pp. 28-31.

<sup>108</sup> Toynbee, 'Historical Summary', Armenian report, p. 593.

<sup>109</sup> Toynbee, 'Historical Summary', Armenian report, p. 593.

<sup>110</sup> J. Heller, *British Policy towards the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1914*, London, Frank Cass and Company, 1983, p. 2.

Turks,<sup>111</sup> as the British believed Turks would implement internal reform. However, this was then later condemned as the result of Toynbee and Bryce's writings and orations.<sup>112</sup> In summary, Toynbee's discussion of Armenians endeavours to both distance and other Ottoman leaders, while also creating a relationship between the British and Armenians.

The creation of a link between Armenian and British populations is illustrated when Toynbee states that the British audience sympathised with the Belgian people in World War I, but not as a 'unfamiliar nation in a distant zone of war.'<sup>113</sup> By representing Armenians as similar to their British audience, Toynbee attempts to create a sympathetic, humanitarian link. While constructing this figurative relationship, Toynbee is simultaneously distancing and othering the Ottoman Government and people. He states they are 'apes of [Georges] Danton and [Maximilien] Robespierre, and doctrinaires to the core.'<sup>114</sup> Toynbee's allusion to French revolutionary figures serves two purposes: it dehumanises Ottomans and it aligns the violence of the French Revolution with the Young Turks' Revolution over the Ottoman Government. Dehumanisation of the Young Turks mirrors dehumanisation of the German army in a British context. In relation to this historical allusion, both Danton and Robespierre were architects of the French Terror period, as both men advocated that radicalism and violence were necessary for revolution, leading to the 'Reign of Terror'. Stella Cottrell notes that historically British patriotic characters were defined through 'construction of the external enemy (the French 'Other')'.<sup>115</sup> An example during the French Revolution was where the British perceived the French as both anti-establishment and anti-monarchy, contradicting their beliefs. Thus, by associating Young Turks with instigators of terror, Toynbee employs existing British prejudices of the French to be applied to the Committee of Union and Progress' leaders, and therefore making them appear a more recognisable enemy and other.

This method of transferring British discontent with othering is also illustrated in the Herero report when O'Reilly juxtaposes German barbarism with Herero civility. This is highly uncharacteristic of early twentieth-century British writings, as traditionally the 'native' was

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<sup>111</sup> Heller, *British Policy towards the Ottoman Empire*, p. 12.

<sup>112</sup> See, e.g. A. J. Toynbee and J. Bryce, *Armenian Atrocities: The Murder of a nation; with a speech delivered by Lord Bryce in the House of Lords*, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1915.

<sup>113</sup> Toynbee, 'Historical Summary', Armenian report, p. 594. By Belgian people, Toynbee is referring to the Belgium Report.

<sup>114</sup> Toynbee, 'Historical Summary', Armenian report, p. 636.

<sup>115</sup> S. Cottrell, 'The Devil on two Sticks: Franco-phobia in 1803', in R. Samuel (ed.), *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, vol. 1, London, New York, Routledge, 1989, pp. 265-271.

viewed as uncivilised; the antithesis of civilised society. Instead, a central rhetorical trope of the Herero report is the ‘noble savage’. This literary device is employed as ‘rhetoric of polemic criticism rather than of ethnographic analysis’, where the author uses the ‘native’ to critique the more ‘civilised’ population.<sup>116</sup> Throughout this report, O’Reilly and Gorges use the Herero people as a means to not only criticise German Colonials, but the Empire as a whole. This is identified when O’Reilly compares the civilised nature of the Herero ‘natives’ with the barbarity of the German colonial soldiers. The latter notion is identified when O’Reilly paraphrases content and rhetoric from Kaiser Wilhelm II’s 1900 speech to his German troops on their departure to the Chinese Boxer rebellion. He states:

The new commander was noted in Berlin for his merciless severity in dealing with natives. In the Chinese Boxer rebellion, he had carried out his Imperial master’s instructions to the letter; and no more worthy son of Attila could have been selected for the work in hand. He had just suppressed the Arab rebellion in German East Africa by bathing that country in the blood of thousands and thousands of its inhabitants, men, women, and children: and his butchery there ended.<sup>117</sup>

In the original Kaiser’s speech it is emphasized how the German troops should emulate the ancient ‘Huns’ under ‘King Attila’ and kill all enemies.<sup>118</sup> The association between German militarism and barbaric Attila’s Huns was widely employed in the British Press and mass media to illustrate excessive violence levels of the German army.<sup>119</sup> This comparison is also reflected in O’Reilly’s German colonial’s description. This connection to ‘barbarism’ is essential as it connotes negative concepts like cruelty and the deprivation of civilisation. It forms a central premise for British prejudices against Germans. The British audience easily discern this implicit stereotype, illustrating how allusions to Attila reflected wider contextual German stereotypes, like the Huns of Mongol. Ellul, who discusses the employment of

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<sup>116</sup> T. Ellingson, *The Myth of the Noble Savage*, Berkeley, London, University of California Press, 2011, p. 7.

<sup>117</sup> O’Reilly, ‘Part one: Natives and German Administration’, Herero report, p. 106. The original 1900 speech by Kaiser Wilhelm II, was addressed to the German troops in Bremerhaven. In this public oration, Wilhelm II states that the German army should emulate the *Huns* and take no quarter (no prisoners). This association of German militarism with the *Huns* became a common element in British wartime propaganda. See, e.g. C. Roetter’s *Psychological Warfare*, Chapter 3, for a discussion of the ‘Hun’ in wartime atrocity propaganda.

<sup>118</sup> J. Prenzler (ed.), *Die Reden Kaiser Wilhelm II* [The Speeches of Kaiser Wilhelm II], vol. 4, Leipzig, p. 209, 1912. Accessed from: German History in Documents and Images, (accessed 20 June 2016). DOI: [http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=755](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=755)

<sup>119</sup> M. Sanders and P. Taylor, *British Propaganda during the First World War, 1914-1918*, London, MacMillan, 1982, p. 137.

existing prejudices, states that propaganda harnesses ‘fundamental currents of the society it seeks to influence’.<sup>120</sup> In addition to stereotyping Germans as Huns, O’Reilly employs the metaphor of a butcher alongside emotive language of blood to further illustrate how German colonials of South-West Africa perceived Herero as ‘out-and-out barbarian, little better than baboons’.<sup>121</sup> This attribution of historical allusions to contemporary condemnation of the antagonist nation replicates the Armenian report’s association of French architects of terror with the leading Turkish figures. The Belgium Report’s similar association of misconduct with German soldiers further identifies the use of historical allusion. Thus, the ‘other’ manifests in the Herero report when O’Reilly discusses German colonial conduct towards the Herero people.

Fundamental to the construction of the other is positioning the enemy as uncivilised, whilst stating oneself as civilised. This is explicitly demonstrated in all three reports when the authors comment on German and Ottoman armies’ conduct against ‘native’ women and children.<sup>122</sup> This is inter-related to a British philosophy of a just war. In all three reports there are quantitatively few examples of maltreatment of women and children. However qualitatively, examples are very explicit when compared to actions against men. During World War I, female images, whether in written or visual form, featured heavily in propaganda narratives. As identified by David Monger, women were symbolically employed in British propaganda as supporting war efforts or domestic peace.<sup>123</sup> Gullace asserts that representations of violated women were deliberately employed by the government to assert that war threatened British domesticity. Violent images containing child abuse solidified this sentiment.<sup>124</sup> Horne and Kramer claim that German mistreatment of women and children were a vital factor in the ‘construction of “German atrocities” by Allied opinion’.<sup>125</sup> During World War I, these lurid depictions were synonymous with atrocity propaganda providing highly symbolic content for potentially influential material.

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<sup>120</sup> Ellul, *Propaganda*, p. 38.

<sup>121</sup> Gorges, ‘Preface’, Herero report, p. 16.

<sup>122</sup> See, e.g. ‘Offences committed against non-combatant civilians during the conduct of war’, Belgium report, pp. 47-53; Toynbee, ‘Historical Summary’, Armenian report, pp. 641, 643; O’Reilly, ‘Part One: Natives and the German Administration’, Herero report, pp. 9-10, 121.

<sup>123</sup> D. Monger, ‘Nothing Special? Propaganda and Women’s Roles in Late First World War Britain’, *Women’s History Review*, vol., 23, no. 4, 2014, p. 521.

<sup>124</sup> Gullace, *The American Historical Review*, p. 714.

<sup>125</sup> Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities*, p. 232.

The Belgian report also displays emotive and explicit language when addressing German army conduct against Belgian women and children. This epitomises othering as lurid descriptions of atrocities contrast the British just war premise. On numerous occasions Bryce emphasises that in war it is common ‘practice to set apart the adult males of the condemned district ... and to reserve the women and children for milder treatment.’ However evidence ‘present[s] many instances of calculated cruelty, often going to the length of murder, towards women and children of the condemned area.’<sup>126</sup> By juxtaposing the European standards of war against Germans, Bryce is aggrandising Britain’s position on war and othering Germany’s behaviour to a lower level.

In Britain it was believed that atrocity evidence of rape represented a larger portion of the German Armies’ conduct in Belgium, however, ‘[c]ontrary to the hitherto accepted view, material of a sexual or prurient nature did not dominate the report, at least quantitatively.’<sup>127</sup> Therefore, while these cases had a lower frequency, their qualitative impact resonated into rallying both European and American public sentiment because of their overt, symbolic content. In discussion of the Belgian report, Horne and Kramer state that ‘[w]hatever their scale and case, raped women were perceived by Allies as an integral part of “German atrocities.”’<sup>128</sup> Horne and Kramer also assert these acts slipped into ‘myth’ or ‘fantasy’, where images of rape were less convincing to the British audience.<sup>129</sup> That being said, such images were still included in the Belgian, Armenian and Herero reports. Therefore, the authors have assumed that images of the maltreatment of women and children should be included for symbolic purposes and to exploit audience sentiments.

Throughout World War I, British media provided increasing coverage of atrocity narratives. Adrian Gregory asserts that during the period the Belgian report was published, atrocity narratives started becoming a typical feature in news media, whereas at the start of the war they were not as common.<sup>130</sup> Gregory illustrates that German ‘primitive hun’ were largely depicted as attacking ‘physical manifestations of civilisation’, such as buildings. He also identifies that ‘hunnish barbarity’ images were far less prominent in contemporary

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<sup>126</sup> ‘Part Two: Offences committed against non-combatant civilians during the conduct of war generally’, Belgian report, pp. 52-53.

<sup>127</sup> Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities*, p. 233.

<sup>128</sup> Horne and Kramer, pp. 196-197.

<sup>129</sup> Horne and Kramer, pp. 234-235.

<sup>130</sup> A. Gregory, ‘A Clash of Cultures: The British Press and the Opening of the Great War’, in T. R. E. Paddock, *A Call to Arms: Propaganda, Public Opinion, and Newspapers in the Great War*, New York, Praeger, 2004, p. 42.

newspapers than historians previously suggested.<sup>131</sup> While Gregory's assertions are illustrated in the Belgian report,<sup>132</sup> the maltreatment of women and children also illustrates another theme in wartime propaganda. Inclusion of such images exploits audience's sentiments, dehumanising the enemy. Atrocity narrative is exemplified by Fisher's section on *The Treatment of Women and Children*, where he states that '[f]rom the very first women they were not safe. A witness gives a story ... of how women were publically raped.'<sup>133</sup> When comparing gender atrocity narratives, Fisher provides a higher level of explicit content dedicated to descriptions of women and children's treatment in length and emotive commentary. When Fisher describes German atrocities against Belgian men, statements are abrupt and factual: '40 men were shot.'<sup>134</sup> However, when addressing atrocities against women, Bryce extends accounts with more graphic details. Furthermore, when describing atrocities against larger groups, the Bryce Committee allocates greater emphasis to both women and children: 'The eye-witness of the massacre saw on his way home 20 bodies, one that of a young girl of thirteen.'<sup>135</sup> Reasons for detailing the 'young girl's' death are the symbolic and emotive connotations associated with the killing of teenagers, such as the end of innocence. Emotive descriptions are also evident when Bryce discusses the use of Belgian 'human shields'. He provides multiple examples of how the German army indiscriminately used people as a 'screen' to prevent Entente soldiers from firing upon them. In one example he states that 'many offences were committed against infants and quite young children. On one occasion children were even roped together and used as a military screen.'<sup>136</sup> This description renders German soldiers as truly barbaric. In a wider British context, such atrocity narratives legitimised existing German army stereotypes as them being 'Prussian Ogres' or 'Beastly Huns' who indiscriminately killed.<sup>137</sup> The Bryce Committee's ongoing qualitative overemphasis of the mistreatment of Belgian women and children solidified existing prejudices of German barbarity and othering of British civilisation.

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<sup>131</sup> A. Gregory, *The Last Great War: British Society and the First World War*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 44.

<sup>132</sup> For examples of the destruction of property, see pp. 24-26.

<sup>133</sup> [Fisher], 'Part 2: Offences committed against non-combatants civilians during the conduct of war generally', Belgian report, p. 53.

<sup>134</sup> 'Part One: The Conduct of the German Troops in Belgium towards the Civilian population,' Belgian report, p. 13.

<sup>135</sup> 'Part One: The Conduct of the German Troops in Belgium towards the Civilian population,' Belgian report, p. 15.

<sup>136</sup> 'Part Two: Offences committed against non-combatant civilians during the conduct of war generally', Belgian report, p. 57.

<sup>137</sup> Sanders and Taylor, *British Propaganda*, p. 137.

Like the Belgian report, the Armenian report adheres to similar literary strategies of explicit depictions of women and children's maltreatment. Laycock's analysis of media representation, during and following Armenian massacres, states that: '[f]or the British public the archetypal image of the Armenian massacres was that of violent attacks on women and children.'<sup>138</sup> This assertion reflects Horne and Kramer's discussion of Belgium massacres. In both instances, depictions of females and children were central image of atrocity narratives,<sup>139</sup> and were symbolically employed in propaganda to represent an attack on British standards of civilisation. In Bryce's preface to the Armenian report he questions: 'How can human beings (it may be asked) have perpetrated such crimes on innocent women and children?'<sup>140</sup> Rhetorical questions in persuasive writing are a method to promote sympathetic responses.<sup>141</sup> Bryce is questioning the humanity of man against man. By questioning these inhumane acts Bryce is relegating the Ottoman Government as being other to the West. With similar descriptions of abuse to women and children as to those in the Belgian report, Toynbee also paints emotive narratives of suffering:

Women who lagged behind were bayoneted on the road or pushed over precipices, or over bridges. The passage of rivers, and especially of the Euphrates, was always an occasion of wholesale murder. Women and children were driven into the water, and were shot as they struggled... The lust and covetousness of their tormentors had no limit.<sup>142</sup>

Like descriptions in the Belgian report, Toynbee employs sexual connotations with the killing of women in his adjective choice: 'lust'. Discussing the Armenian Blue Book, Susan Grayzel asserts that atrocity narratives depicting massacre of Armenian women were highly similar to those in the Belgian report. In both cases there is a 'sexual and gendered dimension of destruction', depicting the maltreatment of women.<sup>143</sup> This representation of maltreatment exploits audience's sentiments and further others soldiers' behaviours. In summary, similarities are drawn between Armenian and Belgian Blue Books concerning themes of maltreatment against both women and children.

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<sup>138</sup> Laycock, *Imagining Armenia*, p. 125.

<sup>139</sup> Laycock, p. 129.

<sup>140</sup> Bryce, 'Preface', Armenian report, p. xxvi.

<sup>141</sup> M. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn, Boston, Thomson Wadsworth, 2005, p. 271.

<sup>142</sup> Toynbee, 'Historical Summary', Armenian report, pp. 643-644.

<sup>143</sup> S. Grayzel, 'Women and Men', in J. Horne (ed.), *A Companion to World War I*, Chichester, U.K., Malden, MA, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, p. 266.

The Herero Blue Book also addresses the theme of maltreatment of women and children, but in a different way. Gorges and O'Reilly compare the 'barbarism' of German settlers with the civility of Herero 'natives'; an explicit example of othering with oppositional binary between Herero and German colonials. However, this time, the Herero 'natives' are positioned as more civilised. This contradicts early twentieth-century literature and public discourse which relegates Africa as an undeveloped and uncivilised region.<sup>144</sup> Comparison of German and Herero peoples is illustrated when O'Reilly's states:

There is something deeply pathetic in this picture of the desperate Herero warrior with his ancient rifle and half-a-dozen cartridges deciding to rise and defend his liberties against the might of the German empire, and despite his worries and anxieties and the terrible future which face him passing resolutions and giving orders to ensure the safety of the women and children of his oppressors.<sup>145</sup>

This description draws British sympathies to the Herero, juxtaposing a single Herero against the entire German Empire. By providing this comparison, O'Reilly is positioning the 'native' as the 'underdog'. An outcome is audience inclination to sympathise with the disadvantaged party, the Herero. O'Reilly's statement also illustrates the trope of the noble savage when he states that the 'native' was seeking to 'defend his liberties against' not only colonials, but the entire German Empire. Both O'Reilly and Gorges use the Herero as an avenue to criticise all German colonials. Criticism is further demonstrated when O'Reilly states that 'evidence of violation of women and girls is overwhelming, but so fully filthy and atrocious details as to render the publication undesirable.'<sup>146</sup> This illustrates direct comparison with Belgian and Armenian reports as Bryce and Toynbee provide multiple examples involving the maltreatment and rape of both women and children. However, O'Reilly's previous statement may be interpreted in several ways: these accounts were too lurid for public consumption, or that O'Reilly had not discovered robust enough material. This prevents readers discrediting the validity of potentially false atrocity narratives. Similarly, this statement is also a titillation, offering the possibility of salacious details without actually revealing them.

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<sup>144</sup> See e.g. J. Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, D. C. R. A. Goonetilleke (ed.), New York, Broadview Press, 1995 [1899], for a classic example of native populations represented as both 'uncivilised' and 'primitive' in early twentieth-century literature.

<sup>145</sup> O'Reilly, 'Part one: Natives and German Administration', Herero report, p. 104.

<sup>146</sup> O'Reilly, 'Part one: Natives and German Administration', Herero report, p. 121.



This theme of the mistreatment of women and children becomes a central contentious point in the Herero report.<sup>147</sup> This report differentiates attack on German colonials by the Herero people.<sup>148</sup> O'Reilly asserts:

When viewed from the point of view of civilisation and common humanity, what a comparison there is between this German barbarism and the attitude of the Herero Chiefs, who before a shot was fired order their people to spare the lives of all German women and children non-combatants.<sup>149</sup>

This explicit example of othering compares German barbarism, a pervading theme in the Belgian report, with the more civilised conduct of the Herero people. Furthermore, O'Reilly's statement distances German colonials from 'civilisation and common humanity', relegating them to being lesser than and other to the British. His description of 'native' populations as civilised is similar to Toynbee's description of Armenians fighting a non-civilised Turkish. In both cases, there appears an orientalist perception that Eastern and 'native' populations are primitive. However, Toynbee and O'Reilly challenge this stance by discussing at length how Armenians and Herero adhere to Western standards. Treatment of 'native' populations as ambiguous is reflected in the Armenian report, where Armenians are believed to occupy an 'in-between' territory.<sup>150</sup> Positioning of the antagonist nation as the negative binary is also found in the Armenian report, where Toynbee employs a similar process of relegating Ottoman Turks to a lesser status and drawing a connection between the West and Armenians. In both cases, the author attempts to create links between oppressed nations and the audience. In the Armenian case, this is explicitly demonstrated by Toynbee's Christianity emphasis. In the Herero report it is the 'native' population upholding 'Western' humanity concepts by deliberately choosing not to attack colonialists' women or children. The authors of each Blue Book use rhetoric to differentiate antagonist or belligerent nations from British standards of civilisation.

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<sup>147</sup> C. Twomey, "Atrocity Narratives and Imperial Rivalry: Britain, Germany and the Treatment of 'Native Races', 1904-1939", in T. Crook and B. Taithe (ed.), *Evil, Barbarism and Empire: Britain and Abroad*, London Macmillan, 2011, p. 212.

<sup>148</sup> O'Reilly, 'Part one: Natives and German Administration', Herero report, p. 87.

<sup>149</sup> O'Reilly, 'Part one: Natives and German Administration', Herero report, p. 121.

<sup>150</sup> Laycock, *Imagining Armenia*, p. 19.

Analysis of these British Blue Books identifies many consistent and overlapping atrocity narratives and themes between all government reports. An essential notion that broadly encompasses all these themes is the concept of othering in all reports: Germans in Belgium, Ottomans and Kurds in Armenia, and German colonials and the military in South-West Africa. This underlying narrative of othering manifests in text when the authors present the different antagonists as being lower than human and indiscriminately savage in their conduct against 'native' populations. This theme is most explicitly illustrated by lurid, explicit descriptions of the maltreatment of women and children in each report. Previous conceptions of atrocity propaganda as atrocity of hate are overly simplistic. This comparative analysis of rhetoric in each Blue Book illustrates that different authors employed the mistreatment of persecuted populations and the antagonist's treatment of women and children to other them from British civilisation standards. Similar tropes of atrocity narratives support this contention and are evident in all three Blue Books.

# Conclusion

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An examination of the Belgian, Armenian and Herero reports demonstrates that the British Blue Books depicting First World War atrocities all incorporate a similar qualitative and thematic structure. Moreover, this matching qualitative structure is also demonstrated when analysing Blue Books created outside the war context. This is demonstrated by the Herero report and discussions of both the Casement and Welsh Blue reports. While the Belgian, Armenian and Herero reports are all structurally different, they are thematically similar. This suggests that Blue Book authors deliberately integrated a specific framework of examination to present to their audience.

The assertion of British wartime Blue Books as falsified and sensationalised atrocity narratives has been widely revised in modern historiography by historians such as Horne, Kramer and Sarafian.<sup>151</sup> This dissertation demonstrates that each Blue Book incorporates propagandistic methodology to appeal to the British audience's sentiments. This is clearly identified by Ellul's assertion that propaganda harnesses existing ideas in the context it attempts to influence.<sup>152</sup> This methodology is also identified by allusion to Huns in the Herero report and the French Revolutionaries in the Armenian report.<sup>153</sup> Therefore, conceptualisation of atrocity propaganda by Read as being based in hatred is only part of the wider picture.<sup>154</sup> Atrocity propaganda, as examined in this dissertation, is far more complex and often involves the distancing of the antagonists from one's own standards.

The discussion of British Blue Book prefaces and their authors illustrates how the compilers' public status increases an audience's inclination to accept the report's findings through deference to authority. Similarities identified between reports include the application of scepticism to establish and encourage credibility for the audience and the impact of the validity of discussions of evidence's origins. Examination of historical narratives illustrates how each Blue Book incorporates rhetoric of opposition between British civilisational standards and war, against the antagonists of Germany in Belgium and South-West Africa

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<sup>151</sup> See chapters 5 and 6 of Horne and Kramer, *German Atrocities*; Sarafian, 'introduction', in Bryce and Toynbee, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire*, p. xviii.

<sup>152</sup> Ellul, *Propaganda*, p. 38.

<sup>153</sup> O'Reilly, 'Part One: Natives and German Administration', *Herero report*, p. 106; Toynbee, 'History Summary', *Armenian report*, p. 636.

<sup>154</sup> Read, *Atrocity Propaganda*, p. 5.

and the Committee of Union and Progress in the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, this binary is explicitly identified in the maltreatment of women and children in all three instances, where such material was incorporated to relegate the adversaries and question their ‘humanity’ by contrasting them against British conceptions of civilisation.

This dissertation augments growing historiographical scholarship on government use of propaganda mediums. Primarily, it adds to historiography on early twentieth-century British Blue Books and how themes embedded in these reports represented wider British social constructions. Due to restrictions in time and length, this dissertation only incorporates previously identified material. Other themes are yet to be investigated. Similarities could be more effectively identified with the incorporation of other Blue Books outside the European context, such as the Herero report, as the majority of scholarship is focused on reports written in a Western context. This dissertation recognises that early twentieth-century British Blue Books incorporated similar structures of atrocity narratives that accommodated the audience’s own cultural dispositions. The ideological shift that saw the introduction of propaganda into the First World War demonstrates that it was no longer just might that would win wars; it was now also the mind.

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